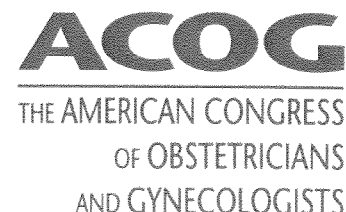


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**Testimony in OPPOSITION of House Bill 4598
Before the House Regulatory Reform Committee
Wednesday, June 10, 2015**

My name is Dr. Matthew Allswede and I am here representing the Michigan Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) to **OPPOSE House Bill 4598**, which seeks to create a pathway for licensure of midwives *without* requiring sufficient standards for education and training to ensure the safety of Michigan women and their babies.

There are currently seven unique organizations that represent midwifery practitioners in the United States, each with different accreditation and training standards. The US Midwifery Education, Regulation and Association (US-MERA) workgroup includes representatives from EACH of these organizations and is committed to unifying the training standards to be compliant with those of the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM). The ICM sets global, *minimum* standards for midwifery education, training, licensure & government regulation, *and* is endorsed by both ACOG and the American College of Nurse Midwifery (ACNM). Some of the ICM standards that are NOT MET by apprenticeship-training pathways include a midwifery curriculum that includes both theory and practice, and a *minimum* training duration of 3 years for direct-entry midwives and *at least* 18 months for those with prior healthcare education.

I have been the director of the Ob-Gyn Residency Program at Sparrow Hospital here in Lansing for the past 8 years. I have a deep, personal appreciation for the value of structured training and qualified supervision in the development of new practitioners. Equally important to the integration of knowledge and procedural skills is the development of clinical judgment in the care of patients. Complications in pregnancy and childbirth occur infrequently but are *catastrophic* if not recognized promptly and managed appropriately. There should be no shortcuts in the training of professionals licensed by the State to ensure the safe delivery of new Michigan citizens.

Until the national midwifery organizations, through US-MERA, agree to training and education standards that are consistent with the International Confederation of Midwives, it will be premature to consider legislation to extend licensure to apprenticeship-trained practitioners.

ACOG opposes House Bill 4598 because midwives licensed in Michigan should be no less well trained than those working in third-world countries.